

# BLIPVERT #6

*BlipVert Goes On The Road  
with the nurses!*



*"...who are the nurses? And why are they investigating a strange sacred space in the heart of Kansas? What is the Truth about Fluoridation? Those who wish to find the answers to these questions will have to join Blind Cudahy Pete Fante and Bombo in their quest for the Garden of Eden. I can only say that readers will not find the journey without pleasure, or, indeed, delight. Oh yeah, and Allah still sucks!"*

*-Salmon Rushdie*



BlipVert



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July 20, 1997

Good Hello. I know what yer all thinking. You're all thinking "What gives!? How could BlipVert #6 be out yet? Based on the publishing schedule of the previous 5 issues, BV6 wasn't supposed to be out until Aug 98!!! And I was gonna submit some stuff too!" Well, this is a special issue, for several

reasons. For one thing, this is probably the first BV theme issue that actually sticks with the selected theme for more than a few pages. The theme this time around is "*BV On the Road with the Nurses*"...which unfortunately is a bit of a misnomer. The story: Yers truly, after crankin' out the last issue, felt a road trip of some sort was in order. I brought up the topic with long time BlipVert collaborator and main instigator for *The Nurses*, John fante. John suggested *The Garden of Eden*, one of the more famous "sacred space" roadside attractions in the midwest. That sounded cool to me, so the trip was planned. Unfortunately, when the time came to hit the road, *The Nurses* had been hauled into court over alleged copyright violations on their most recent recording, "*Bambi goes Crazy 8 Bonkers With his Drill and Sex!*" on mr. paranoid! records. Not wanting to cancel the trip on his account, John sent his brother, *Blind Cudahy Pete fante* on the trip in his place without telling me beforehand. Then yer humble narrator ran into a few legal problems of his own and was advised not to leave town. Not wanting to cancel the trip on my account, I sent BlipVert field agent Bombo [aka "Bombo, the pinhead with perfect pitch" real name unknown. Bombo is a microcephalic who was cruelly mistreated and put on display by the *Franzen Bros. circus* until rescued by BlipVert agents in 1992. *Franzen Bros. Circus Inc.* primarily performs in small towns throughout the midwest between April 30 and Oct. 31 every year. They are a bunch of evil scumbags and should be avoided -- if *Franzen Bros.* comes to your town and you do go, parents keep your small children at your side at all times. I am completely serious about this. Bombo now resides at the BlipVert Ranch and is employed by a local insurance company as a print systems technician.] in my place without mentioning it to John beforehand. So what transpired is that neither BlipVert proper or the Nurses ever made it on the road, tho representatives thereof did. And apparently had a pretty good time. *Blind Cudahy Pete* and Bombo brought back a large set of rather unusual data from their trip, and we figured that rather than sort through it all now, we'd just publish the whole thing under the BlipVert masthead and figure it out later. Lots of good stuff here: Bombo's travelogue, a brief history of the nurses [a bit of background material so you'll get most of the in-jokes scattered across this issue], actual transcripts of the tour guide's fake Kansas accent during the tour of the Garden of Eden, a song written by *Blind Cudahy Pete* while in Lawrence, KS, and some other good stuff. If you're good, perhaps we'll throw in a Captain Fantastic adventure, but I'm not promising anything.

Next stop, next Summer: Mutter Museum, Philadelphia

yer pal  
DDCM



Duke duck, were one of a mind to honor (god knows why) the Dukes of Hazzard with duckly raiment. Time may change the significance of the shed's decoration, but, if the shed (D.O.H. shirt) is merely re-introduced into an environment of countless other sheds (the contemporary mad gaggle of miscellaneous t-shirty), it remains just another shed, though its irony content certainly seems very grounded in duck, as opposed to newer D.O.H. shirts, where the irony would be merely a component of the shed. I guess what I'm saying is that it could be no more than a duckly ironic shed. When FFA jackets are worn by non-FFA affiliated humans, on the other hand, they are being removed from their normal context and reintroduced into a completely different environment -- achieving duck somewhere along the line. In a land of ducks and one shed, the shed is a duck and I guess the ducks are sheds, although I wouldn't swear to it. (alternately: "in the land of labia, the mushroom is the king.")

<<Question Two: In some cases, does the place of purchase distinguish duck from decorated shed. Another example: If I were to buy a "Black Cat" t-shirt at the local Ragstock (or other odious trendy clothing store) with a pair of really really really big pants, I've obviously purchased a duck. But if I were to purchase the same "Black Cat" t-shirt, 3 packs of 1 1/2" Hot Giraffes, a shower spark emitting UFO, a Bootlegger Mammoth Smoke, 2 packs of Black Cat Mega Flashes, 2 Chinese Magic Shots and 2 dozen Black Cat bottle rockets at Global Fireworks in Missouri on the way back to Iowa City from Lucas, Kansas have I in this instance purchased a duck?>>

Norb: Hmm. This is a good question. While I feel fairly certain that the environment the consumer ultimately utilizes the garment in question in is far more influential on its duckness/shedness than its place of origin, it would be very difficult for me to say with any degree of conviction that the point of purchase cannot duckify that which would otherwise be shed in some cases. I think the actual description of a case such as this could be adequately though inelegantly expressed as follows:

Decorated Shed\*

\*this is a duck

...i.e., something that gives all rightful appearance of being a shed until/unless one is privy to the partially obscured qualifier. Or whatever.

<<Question Three: Say a friend of yours is growing out of his shirts; for the sake of argument, let's randomly pick the name...oh, I don't know...Jordan Block. He gives you his 1986 "Unsafe In Any Town" Agent Orange t-shirt. Sure, at first glance it's a decorated shed, but doesn't the age of the shirt bring it up a notch or two to the Platonic Duck Ideal?>>

Norb: I suppose it's possible. While any Agent Orange dry good manufactured after, I dunno, 1982 scream little else but "SHED! SHED! SHED!" at me, I do have a four-dollar Ramones t-shirt from 1979, which is now about five times as wide as it is long, and I'd certainly have to stick up for the duckness of THAT particular entity, so I suppose there's no reason why it couldn't be applied to other garments, although this IS beginning to become far more subjective than seems appropriate. I think the key is that the shirt would have to show visible signs of not being from the modern era, whenever that is.

<<Question Four: For this argument, let's picture two more fictitious friends. One has a Tracy Lords t-shirt he purchased in a boutique full of porn star merchandise. The other took a photo of Ron Jeremy during a close-up of his face, took said photo to Shopko and had it made into his very own custom puffy lettered Ron Jeremy shirt. Do either of these shirts have that "pretty duck look" (oh, that was a clever one, wasn't it; bet you're still snickering that one off), and if both, which one is more ducky than the other?>>

Norb: Tracy is pure shed. The Ronic the Hedgehog Jeremy shirt is more duck, but the burgeoning yuckiness of such a garment leaves me little desire to contemplate the matter any further than that. Good day.

## The "Duck vs Decorated Shed" Debate, revisited with Rev. Norb

The "Duck vs Decorated Shed" theory: In the book "Learning From Las Vegas", author Robert Venturi explains how the automobile has changed architecture-- he states that once long distance travel was readily available to the average consumer, businesses needed to be able to attract customers from the road. An early kind of solution was a building that sculpturally became a symbol. The "Duck" building in Long Island, NY is the most famous example: the building was shaped like a giant duck, and it was a store that sold duck eggs and other avian products. The "Duck" conveyed meaning directly, or by one-to-one symbolism. A "Decorated Shed", on the other hand, is a building decorated in an unusual manner to attract customers, but the decorations themselves have no relationship to the type of business transacted within the building. A Las Vegas example might be a casino shaped like a pyramid. Get it? If a building is shaped like a duck and it sells duck related products, its a duck. If a building is shaped like a duck but is, say, a service station, its a decorated shed.

And what the heck does this have to do with BCP and Bombo going to Kansas? Ok, as we motored through the barren waste that is NW Missouri, we discussed the idea of producing this zine...not too much later the talk turned to other famous examples of travel journalism (I know there's a proper term for this, I just don't know what it is). On the road being a prime example. Another great example was the story "Neo-Kerouac Bullshit" by Rev. Norb which was published in the 58-fucking-millionth (by Norb's estimation, though I am quite sure that that is not off by much) issue of (sic)TEEN, Norb's famous contribution to world zine culture. In NKB Norb described his adventures on the road from Green Bay to Chicago and back to see the Meatmen and find proper toilet facilities. Along the way he surveys his clean laundry and must choose between wearing either a striped shirt or a Screeching Weasel t-shirt. Here's the important part: He settles the debate by applying the Duck vs Decorated shed theory to the two shirts: the wearer of a SW t-shirt is making the statement "I must be cool, look, I'm wearing a Screeching Weasel shirt", which may or may not be the case--no matter how cool your tshirt is, if you're a dork, you're a dork. A striped shirt, however is a duck because it makes no statement about your relative coolness factor.

So anyway, while discussing this, we came up with a few other items of clothing which could either be regarded as ducks or decorated sheds, depending on circumstances.. We thought it might be fun to put the questions to Norb and let him be the judge. Here goes...

<<Question One: Does irony make a duck out of a decorated shed? For example: someone finds a "Dukes of Hazzard" t-shirt in a Goodwill, purchases said goofy shirt and begins wearing it. Suddenly, every Ragstock (or other odious trendy clothing store) in the Midwest begins selling newly printed "Dukes of Hazzard" t-shirts for teeny-bopper consumption. In the time between the Goodwill purchase, and the mass marketing of the all too self consciously campy shirt, was it a duck? Feel free to change "Dukes of Hazzard" t-shirt to some other ironically worn outer garment (oh, I don't know what...maybe an FFA jacket) in your response to suit your taste.>>



Norb: To answer this in the Dukes-O-Hazzard specific sense: NO, Enos, you dipstick! Due to the fact that Bo, Luke, and Daisy (the objets de shed decoration) are, in fact, wearers of garments themselves, it would be FAR TOO SIMPLE to merely don a shirt SIMILAR OR IDENTICAL TO that which Bo or Luke might wear (or, better yet, a red gingham halter top and some pancreas-flossin' short denim shorts a la Daisy), and play that off as one's intended

## a short history of the nurses

the following article first appeared in Scandinavia's Seldom Seen Zine, and is reprinted here by permission of the author, Seldom Seen. john fante provided the translation, and spruced up the syntax...

Summer '92: john fante and Obscure Images are squatting in an abandoned building they call the Shoggoth. Rows of bookshelves (containing the most extensive library in the country on the subjects of Theosophy, Semiotics, and the histories of the Templars, Rosicrucians, Free-Masonry and the Golden Dawn) serve as walls; as do thousands of records, CD's and musical

equipment of all types. One day, the 1970's prototype microwave oven begins to smolder and soak the Shoggoth in radiation, so the boys quarantine the kitchen, and begin the slow process of removing the contamination. The absent minded Obs forgets his lead lined suit on a raid of the refrigerator one fateful night, and the scanner that they have installed in his glass eye to monitor police transmissions is irradiated and begins to pick up satellite transmissions of an unknown origin. Within a week, the encrypted messages are deciphered, and the enigmatic gentlemen become the only two people in America to know the Truth about fluoridation. Thus, the Nurses are born. In an attempt to disseminate this information, Obs and fante begin recording the transmissions on DAT, and add an ambient musical background by using an oscillator hooked up to a fluoride toxicity meter monitoring the Shoggoth's tap water. Soon, the Powers That Be discover the Nurses plan, and Obs is forced to flee with the master tapes. This explains why Obs did not perform live with the Nurses until '97: he was in constant



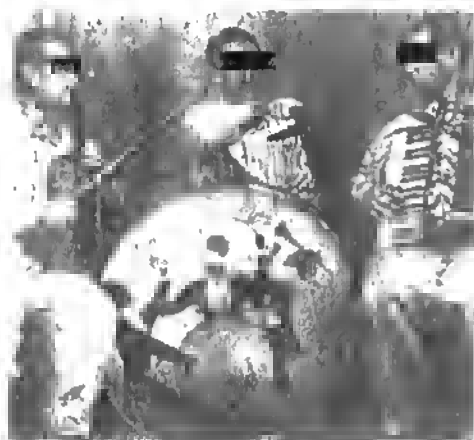
Shoggoth security cam photo of Obscure Images and john fante with prototype water toxicity meter - analog synth interface.



Photocopies of Obscure Images's notebooks re: algorithms used to convert water toxicity data into analog synth parameters. Obtained from CFR via FOIA.

negotiation with the CFR and the Tri-lateral Commission for his and fante's very lives. In the end, the master tapes, and the duplicate set that had been hidden in the body of John's brother Blind Cudahy Pete fante's guitar, are given to the FTB for the release of Obs from the island prison in which he has been incarcerated.

'93: John hides from the FTB in the Michigan's Upper Peninsula until the preliminary shit has been wiped from the fan, and indulges in his first love: free jazz. He meets up with two of the members of Stool, a UT punk band famous for its double-time Didjits covers and ten minute epic version of "John Wayne was a



John and the members of Stool recording in Toddler's basement. From left: John, Raggy, and Toddler.

Nazi". Raggy, the Toddler, and John produce ten hours of home grown, four track noise called "A Jello Horse". Alas, copyright infringement problems plague this particular piece, and it has been stored at the bottom of an abandoned salt mine in Utah until either the copyright laws are changed or the government of the United States of America is finally destroyed. We anxiously hold our collective breath here at Seldom Seen Zine for one of these two inevitable events to occur.

December '94: Public insistence finally coerces the Nurses to tour the US. John (backed more than ably by the aforementioned Toddler, and two mysterious figures known as Q432# and BG123\$) plays a warm up gig in Green Bay, home of the Shoggoth, to celebrate. It's a success, and

things took promising for the upcoming tour. But, superstardom is to elude the band because of new controversy and new indictments. On their way to New York City for the first east coast gig (which had sold out in mere hours), the Nurses stop to play the National Anthem at a Buffalo Sabers/Ottawa Senators hockey game. The version offends the Buffalo fans so greatly that a riot ensues, and the National Guard has to be called to suppress the violence. The Nurses barely escape with their lives, and once again are forced to disband and seek separate sanctuaries. John makes his way to Calgary Alberta Canada, and lives with friends and fellow like minded musicians in the Little Osaka district. The others have not been heard from since the Buffalo incident. John presumes they have all perished.



The nurses play a spontaneous set (at the request of a fan at the bar) at Alinsky's just outside of Buffalo (south on Highway 5). Hours later, they played their ill-fated Buffalo Sabres show. From left: John, Q432#, and BG123\$.

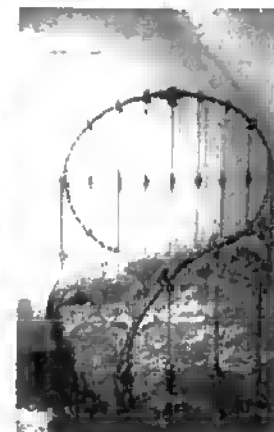
## Synchronicity, too!

Yeah, we noticed a few rather odd coincidences whilst on our trip, and figured we had better write them down so we could figure out the significance (if any) of these events later.

As stated earlier, the soundtrack of our trip was primarily the first 2 Aluminum Knot Eye tapes, and 9 hrs of Negativland "Over the Edge" broadcasts, which being so laden with cultural references as they are, I guess its inevitable that it would trigger some sort of serendipitous event at some point. Its just odd that when one did happen, it occurred just minutes before we arrived at the Garden. Goes like this: Shortly after leaving Lawrence, KS for the 3 hr trip west, Blind Cudahy Pete popped "The Lazy Weatherman" episode of OTT into the tape player. In the episode, the host, Dr. Oslo Norway, attempts to find out why the Weatherman is so lazy that he hasn't toured with Negativland since 1986. There were plenty of references to SOMETHING, tho I wasn't sure exactly to what...Dr. Norway kept ending long winded explanations with phrases like "lost, like tears...in the rain" at which point the Weatherman would get mad and say "I suppose next yer gonna show me your damn owl again"...none of this made a whole lot of sense until near the end of the broadcast when Dr. Norway gives the Weatherman a test to determine the cause of his laziness. The test is nearly word for word the same test that is given in *Blade Runner* to determine if the subject is a replicant; this also explains the "tears...owl" thing. At any rate, this dialog was playing on the tape player mere minutes before we arrived in Lucas. If you are familiar with the landscape around Lucas, you know that there is a reservoir just to the south, and Hwy 232 actually runs along the top of the dam on the east end of the reservoir. The last chance you have to turn off before driving over the top of the dam is **Deckerd Road**.

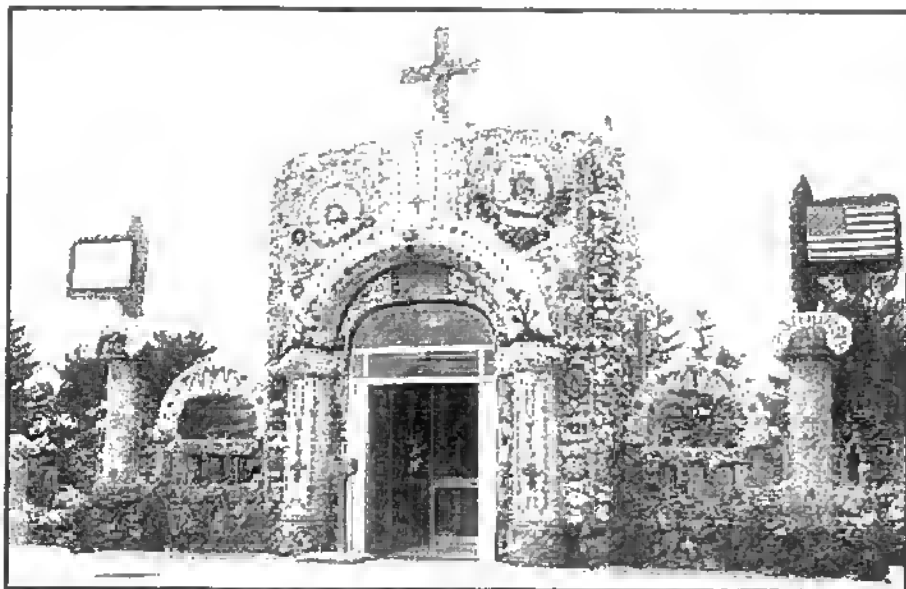


Above: scene from *WAX, or the Discovery of Television Among the Bees*. Right: Photograph taken in upstairs bedroom at the Garden of Eden by Bombo.

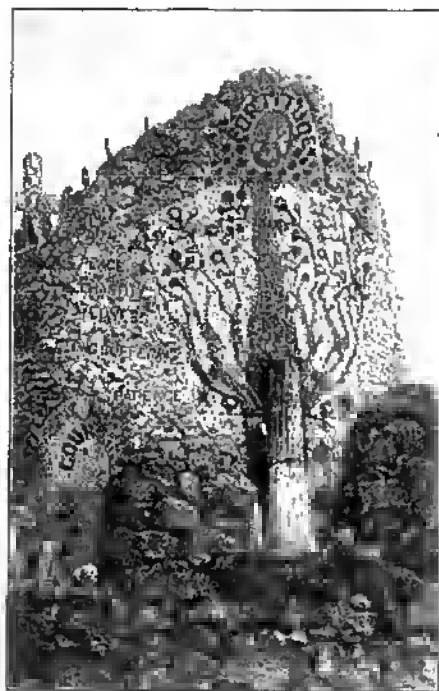


Ok this one is weirder...as should be pretty obvious by now, the main goal of the road trip was to visit the Garden of Eden. When we got back to Iowa City, we were pretty wiped from the trip. Blind Cudahy Pete suggested we just decompress somewhat by pickin up some beers and watchin a movie or somestuch. We marched on over to The Hut [top notch source of obscure, foreign, and otherwise movies ..

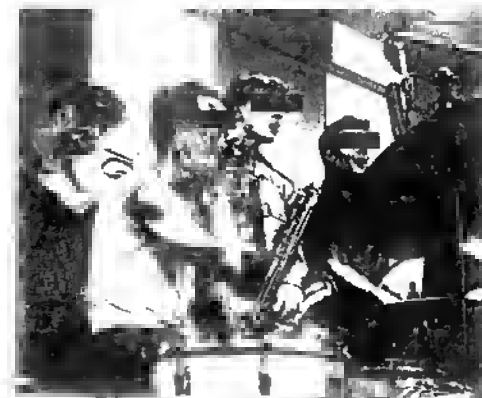
INCLUDE ADDRESS] to see what they had. The first thing that caught my eye was that they had a copy of "*WAX: Or the Discovery of Television Among the Bees*". I was somewhat excited by this, as I had been wanting to see this movie since it was released in 91 or 92. When it came out, mags like Mondo 2000 were all over it (and were willing to talk all about it but never really give more than a cursory explanation of what it was actually about, which drove me nuts), but I was never able to get my hands on a copy. I was hopping around in the store saying "GET THIS ONE! GET THIS ONE!" so Blind Cudahy Pete agreed. Afterwards we purchased some beer and plunked down to take a look at WAX. I was not disappointed, if you haven't seen WAX, ya gotta track down a copy. Top Notch, Spaulding! But the part that's relevant here is that in the movie, the main character, Jacob Maker, was apparently born at The Garden of Eden! Part of the movie actually takes place there. What are the odds? An odd side note to this is that tourists are allowed to check out the house that's on the grounds at Garden of Eden, and each bedroom has these groovy, really ornate beds in them. One of them beds was particularly cool, and I noted this to Blind Cudahy Pete and took a picture of it. There is a scene in WAX where Jacob Maker is shown sleeping in this same bed.



*Dickeyville Grotto, Dickeyville, WI.*



February '95: At the behest of Green Bay music fans (principally free jazz connoisseur Timebomb Tom Smith), John leaves the relative safety of Calgary and returns to perform once more. This time he is backed by Green Bay free jazz sensations The Steven Ginsberg Trio: the indescribable Steven Ginsberg on guitar, the indestructible Frankie Getz on drums, and the inexplicable Lucien X on bass. The show goes over so well, that John and his brother Blind Cudahy Pete perform the six hour initiation ceremony officially making Nurses out of the Trio.



John and the trio play live for the "Uneeda Clue" radio program in Aspen, CO. From left: John, Frankie, Steven, and Lucien.

February '96: Once again John crosses the border to play the Titledown Free Jazz Fest, and is reunited with the Steven Ginsberg Trio. Unfortunately, the show is marred by a constant barrage of Japanese profanity and abuse that John and Shigatsu Ichi (John's bookie, who has chased him to GB in an effort to collect the rather substantial gambling debts John has accrued over the last year) throw at one another during the Nurses set.

February '97: The triumphant return of Obscure Images highlights this characteristically unpredictable but always entertaining set by the Nurses. Young up and coming jazz performer Cody Precedent appears in the lineup as a special guest. He is given the status of honorary Nurse and only passes out three times during the initiation ceremony (the band was quite proud of him). The Nurses leave the stage blistered and praying to their patron saint (St. Blaise, patron of throat ailments), but quite pleased.

**Current Activities of the fante brothers:** John still lives in Calgary, where he spends most of his time jogging and playing the Little Osaka club scene (look for the bootlegs!) Blind Cudahy Pete fante divides his time between Iowa City bars and Singapore whorehouses, but will occasionally grant interviews and take road trips to odd American sculpture gardens.

**Obscure Images**, no stranger to the dark underworld of global conspiracy, is currently working for cDc in its goal to overthrow the current global power structures. He is working to help implement cDc's goal of one-world fascist oligarchy.

**Current Activities of the others:** unknown.

-ss, '97

contact the nurses at  
patientemmett@earthlink.net



the nurses



## To Thee Departed

*The following transcript of a song by blind cudahy pete fante was commissioned by Blipvert and was executed by Dr. Ankeny Fuselage of the Boston Conservatory of Music. A book of essays about the Nurses written by Dr. Fuselage for the New England Journal of Avant-Garde Bathos was recently anthologized by the Boston Conservatory's publishing house. Entitled 'Boilermaker's Disease: The Intrusive Din of Machinery After the Industrial Revolution and its Pastiche in Contemporary Music' (ISBN: 0-300-06440-3), it should be available by this coming Fall.*

Oh, I'm pack my bags and gone  
Oh, I'm pack my bags and gone  
I'm goin' on down to Phoenix Arizone

Got on my braces, my boots on my toe  
Shined up my boots, baby, got em on my toes  
Got my batteries charged up, point my chair and gone

If they ask 'bout me, tell them I am gone  
Yeah, If they ask about me, say that I'm finally gone  
Yeah, I hit the cold, baby, froze at my door

Oh, I'm pack my bags and gone  
Oh, I'm pack my bags and gone  
Yeah, I'm headin' south, Phoenix Arizone



Blind Cudahy Pete's guitar after the road trip.



Blind Cudahy Pete and Bombo on the road.

Day 4. Skies clear and sunny. 80 degrees. BCP and myself hit the road back to Iowa City. Stop at Global Fireworks Warehouse in Missouri. We buy a big pile of fireworks, and have to sign a waiver stating that we will not fire them off in the state of Missouri. I spend the rest of the trip to IC paranoid that the whole works will spontaneously combust in the hatch while we're on the road.

Arrive in Iowa City in late afternoon. We pay a visit to the infamous Black Angel of IC. BCP tells me about a local blind eccentric who theorized that BCP's uncle may have been Bigfoot.

Day 5. Skies partly cloudy. 78 degrees. I say farewell to Blind Cudahy Pete and point the festiva towards Chilton. About 1:15 pm I pass through Dubuque. I spend nearly an hour searching for a Mexican restaurant called **The Tasty Taco**, which a friend has assured me serves the best tacos in the midwest, but I am unable to find it. Disappointed, I get back on the road.

2:30 I arrive in Dickeyville. Skies are clear, so I pay the Grotto a short visit. The Grotto is another really fascinating sacred space, almost as interesting as The Garden of Eden, but space does not permit a full explanation. Perhaps next issue... suffice to say, it is worth a trip by itself if you haven't seen it, and are into this sort of thing.

7PM. Home. Sleep.



A quick visit to the infamous Black Angel, Iowa City, IA.

This fence around the mausoleum has nails in it, this is because people would come by and sit on the fence and make fun of him while he worked, so he put the nails in the fence so they couldn't sit on the fence and make fun of him anymore...the angel above the mausoleum is because he didn't know where he was going to go after he died, if he was going to go to Heaven or Hell, if he was going to Heaven the angel would lead him up, if he was going to go to Hell, he had a water jug placed beside the casket made of cement, so he could draw water on the way down, and have something to drink, because he heard there wasn't any water to drink down in hell. He's inside in a cement casket with a glass top on it where you can view the body. He's been in there for 65 years. You can use your discretion as to whether you want to look at him or not, we ask that no pictures be taken inside the mausoleum.

BCP fante: What? Well thats no fun!

[everybody goes in to mausoleum...]

tourist: was this ever air-tight at one time?

TG: right, uh-huh, I think about 8-10 years ago it got a leak in it.

tourist: before that, was he fairly well preserved?

From what I understand, he was pretty well preserved.

BCP Fante: well Bombo, [muffled...tape ends].

[and you know what? considering he's been in there for 65 years, he was in surprisingly good shape. In case you were wondering.]



After checking out the Garden, stopped at Linda's Cafe for lunch. Kinda scary: No coffee, the only things to drink were Pepsi and Budweiser. Locals looked at us funny. I got the strange feeling that if we were to accidentally violate some local ettiquette, these guys would pound us. Ate quickly and hit the road

back to Lawrence.

Lawrence: 7pm, slightly overcast, 72 degrees. We kick around on Massachusetts St. again. I find a hardcover edition of "Very Special People" at a used bookstore for cheap. Stop by the same bar to drink beers out of jars again.

## There and Back Again, a Pinhead's Holiday

Day 1. Set out from Chilton, WI. Not too much happening thus far. It occurs to me about 20 miles from home that I have forgotten to bring along any tapes to listen to on the trip. The first two Aluminum Knot Eye cassettes are packed away in my luggage, which doesn't do me a whole lot of good at this point.

Stopped in Madison to fill up the car. Weather ok. Partially cloudy, about 75 degrees.

Was hoping to stop at the Dickeyville Grotto in Dickeyville, WI on the way to Iowa City, but it started raining shortly after passing through Madison and continued until well after Dubuque, IA.

Arrived in Iowa City, IA, mid-afternoon. Partially cloudy, 78 degrees. After arriving at Blind Cudahy Pete Fante's residence and stowing my luggage, BCP, myself, and oddly, Shigatsu Ichi (John Fante's bookie in Calgary, who happened to be in IC for a totally unrelated business meeting) take a stroll downtown to buy film, and stop at the Deadwood, a fine local drinking establishment with some mighty fine pinball. I get my butt kicked several times by BCP and Ichi while playing "Attack from Mars".

Day 2. Skies clear. 72 degrees. BCP and myself hit the road for Lawrence KS. The soundtrack for our trip consists of the aforementioned Aluminum Knot Eye cassettes, Songs in the Key of Springfield, Several Daniel Johnston tapes, and 9 hrs. worth of Negativland "Over the Edge" broadcasts.

Highlights of this leg of the trip: Not many. I am amazed that the Festiva can actually maintain a speed of 70MPH for 6 hrs w/out blowing up. I have seen the earthly sub-urban Hell, and its name is Des Moines, IA. Never ever go there. We pass through Missouri and note a few Fireworks warehouses which we will hit on the way back.

6PM. Skies clear. 68 degrees. We arrive in Lawrence, KS, home of William Burroughs, though none of the locals will tell us where he lives. After stowing the gear at the motel, we decide to cruise for record stores and other cool stuff. I nearly get us killed by accidentally running a red light. The cultural center of Lawrence seems to be Massachusetts St. Several good book stores, record stores. etc. Curious note about Lawrence: All the hipsters in town are older than you might expect--seeing folks w/ black turtlenecks, Docs, and greying at the temples is an odd thing, but comforting in a way. We have a few beers at some bar which serves beer out of large jars.

Day 3. Skies clear. 78 degrees. We head west to Lucas. The elevation rises sharply as we head west. About 1:30 pm. Blind Cudahy Pete Fante and myself arrive at our destination: The Garden of Eden in Lucas, KS! I recall that I felt an odd feeling of deja vu as we stepped out of the car. After loading our cameras, we stepped into the Log Cabin. BCP, thinking a bit further ahead than I was, made an audio recording of the tour. What follows is a transcript of the tape.

Tour Guide: Are you here to take the tour?

BCP fante: Sure!

TG: it'll be \$4.25 apiece.

BCP fante: alright...say, you don't mind if I'm recording the tour, do you?



S.P. Dinsmoor  
Creator of the  
Garden of Eden

TG: No thats all right, as long as its not going to be published...you won't be publishing this, will you?

BCF fante: Oh, no. (Bombo snickers in background)

[tape resumes at beginning of tour...tour guide suddenly has a southern drawl which wasn't present before...]

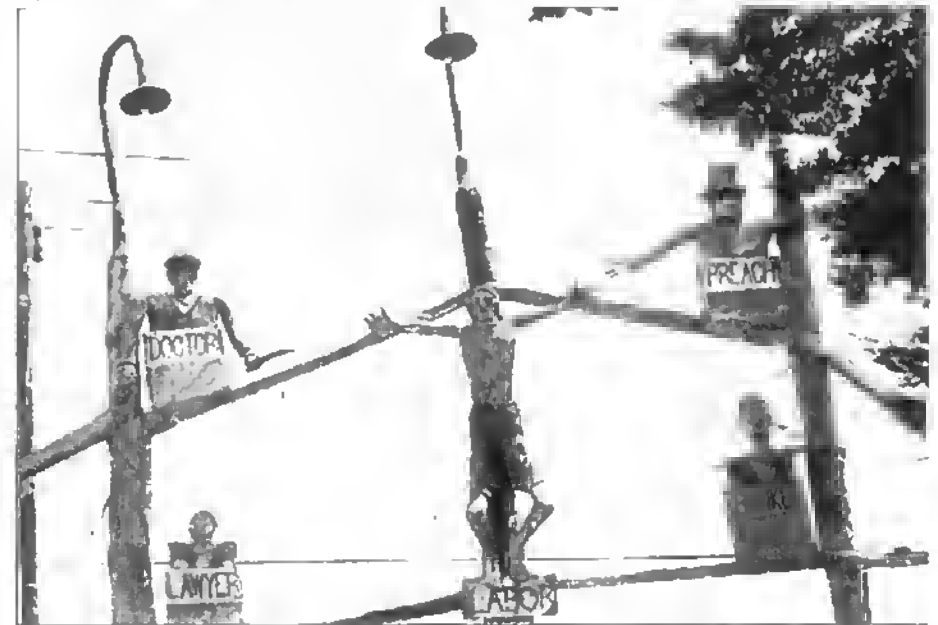
...at age 19 he joined the civil war and fought on the side of the North. This is a picture of him right here. He was 5'5", not a very tall man, but he was very mighty with his voice and he wasn't afraid to speak up for what he believed in, and you can tell that when you look at the sculptures outside. He served 3 years as a nurse, and during that time he saw the battle of Gettysberg, the march on the south and the capture of Lee. After the war he received a check each month from the govt for his services and that's partly what funded this cabin and the garden. 1866 he was in Illinois where he taught school for 5 years. This is where he met his 1st wife, Francis A. (Barlow) Journey, she was a widow with 2 children, and had quite a bit of money from her 1st husband.

Her and Mr. Dinsmoor got married on horseback in 1870. so you can tell he did things a little bit more differently than most of us did. Over on the buffet you can see a picture of the 4 sons and 1 daughter that they had between the two of them. In 1888 the family moved here to Lucas, KS. He was very involved with the Populist party. The Populist party were against big businesses, which took advantage of the farmers and the working man...and he included bankers with that. Over here you can see this desk that he made, in the back of the desk there is a secret door where he kept his money, so he didn't have to trust the banks with his money.

in 1905 he retired from farming, and he started building this house. it took him 2 years on the house, and 20 some more years on the garden outside. He was 64 years old when he started this project, so he did all of this in his retirement years.



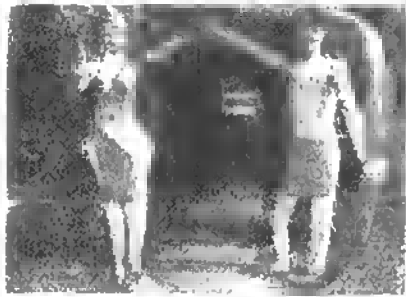
This sculpture right up here is called the Goddess of Liberty, she is dressed in a flag, taking a spear down thru that octopus, representing the trust companies again. The man and woman have a saw, they are sawing through the limb [which supports the octopus] of chartered rights. On the saw it says "ballot". He was telling us to use your ballot to destroy the things you didn't want, he was firm beleiver in using your voting rights. There is a black man over here pointing towards the sculpture, and a woman over on this side. The woman and the black man did not have the right to vote at that time, and he was expressing his concern for their right to vote also. The pyramid underneath has flowers, he planted them that way so he wouldn't have to bend over in the mud to do his gardening, so he built them up on cement steps that way.



This sculpture is called the Labor Crucifix, this is the last sculpture he worked on before he became blind with cataracts, you'll notice the banker and lawyer are not finished, the laborer in the middle is like the man working with his hands for his money, the people around him are taking money away from him-- the preacher, lawyer, doctor, and banker. He said it wasn't just those four who took from the laborer, actually thousands took from the working man, he just considered these four the leaders...

**Hey thanks to:** Rev. N0rb --for clearing up the Ducks vs. Decorated Shed debate; Seldom Seen -- for allowing his history of the nurses to be reprinted; Andy Theiss -- for decoding the pics that Seldom Seen emailed to BV (damn Norwegian compression algorithms!); Obscure Images -- for clarifications to SS's article and photocopies of his notebooks; Blind Cudahy Pete and Bombo -- for stepping in when and where BV and the nurses couldn't. Dedicated to the memory of Sage the Proofreading Cat.





up the beer bottles with cement and then break the bottles, tell people they could look at that, maybe it would quench the thirst for alcohol that way rather than having to drink [BCP fante and Bombo break into fits of laughter]. Under this porch Mr. Dinsmoor had an electric generator--he had electricity and running water two years before the rest of the town did, so you can see he was also a very progressive man...

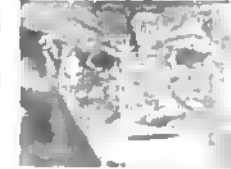
[tape resumes in front of house, at beginning of the Garden]

he had a lot of problems with the city when he was working on his sculptures, one of the problems he had was with Adam and Eve, he portrayed them just the way they were in Genesis, that is, without any clothes on. The city got after him about that, so he extended the hair on Eve, and put a Masonic apron on Adam (Mr. Dinsmoor was of the Masonic lodge here in town). Eve is taking an apple from one snake, and Adam is stomping on the head of another snake with his heel there. Back behind Eve is a cement tree close to the corner of the house, when you follow that clear up, you can see there is a great big eyeball at the very top, that's the All-Seeing Eye of God, a guardian angel is

back there with his sword guarding all those apples back there on the tree of Life. Inside the cement tree there is a metal gutter, you can see the hole right there at the foot of the angel, he ran a hose on in to the basement, when people were out here looking around, or kids playing, he'd go down into the basement and yell thru that hose, it would sound like God speaking thru that angel, and it'd startle 'em. We were gonna rig that up this past Halloween, but it was kind of a cold night to be messing with it...



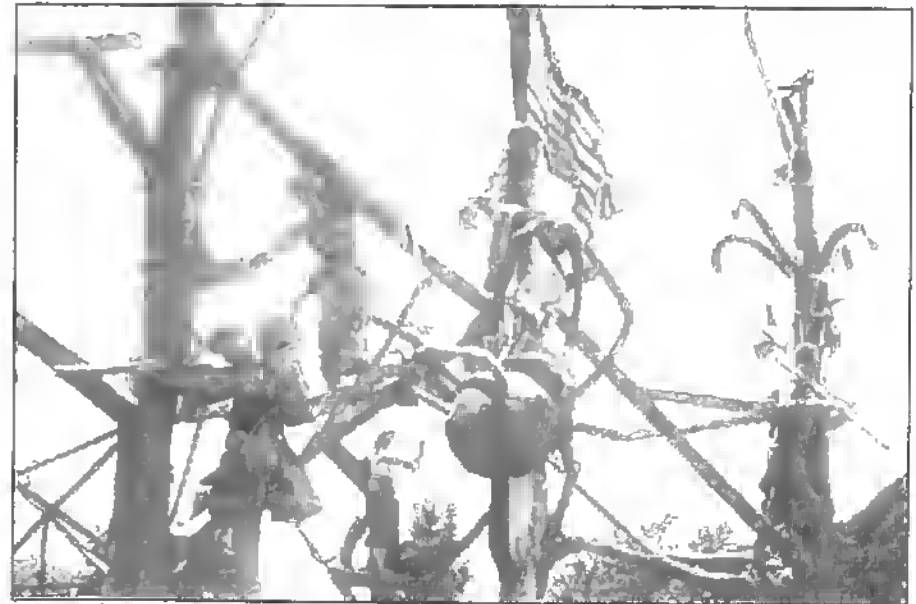
Back behind Adam is the Devil. The devil has a snake in one hand, and a pitchfork in the other. the Devil's head is hollow, with a light inside. When he'd light the place up, there'd be this eerie glow coming out of the Devil's head. This Garden of



Eden sign he added later, people kept asking him what this place was called so he called it the Garden of Eden. All the sculptures on this side of the house are biblical, but they are Mr. Dinsmoor's own interpretation of the bible. Right up above us here, are two storks with little faces right

underneath the wings. These are the babies brought to the garden of eden. There's three of them up there, the fourth one has fallen out, and is sitting on the brace of the Garden of Eden sign, and he felt this was the start of civilization, when this baby fell down into the garden. He didn't plan on it, but when he

looked back, he saw that the Devil's pitchfork was aimed right at the baby -- here



the Devil was trying to destroy civilization -- so he put that hand up there, its the Hand Of God stretched out to stop the pitchfork to save civilization at that time ...in this next tree are the four babies grown up, this is the story of Cain and Abel, bringing their sacrifices to God, Abel has a ram, Cain has a rotten pumpkin...

According to the bible, Cain was jealous of Abel, because Abel had the accepted sacrifice, so here he takes Abel out and kills him, he didn't have any guns to kill Abel with, so what he used, he used his hoe, and smashed in Abel's face...the blood is dripping down here. Here, his wife and his dog have discovered the body, you'll



notice that the dog has real teeth-- they're coyote's teeth-- the angel up above is coming down to pick up the body and take it to Heaven. Off to the left of the angel you'll see another Eye and a hand pointing to this corner tree down here, its the accusing Hand and Eye of God, accusing Cain of what he done to Abel...if you look up here at Cain, you'll see a red cross on his forehead, the Bible talks about the mark that God put on Cain when he threw him out of the Garden, but it never says what the mark looked like, this is just what Mr. Dinsmoor thought it looked like. Dinsmoor liked to argue with preachers a lot, so this is probably something he argued about. He felt he knew a bit more about the bible than most of the preachers did. Down below Cain here is a dry pool, when Mr. Dinsmoor was putting Cain up here, he

struck water, he thought it was very lucky to have a spring on his property...as it turns out he had accidentally struck the water main going into town, so he had a fountain here until the city figured out what he had done...

The rest of the sculptures we're looking at here are more modern, this octopus here represents the trust companies, the big businesses which were taking advantage of the people, its reaching out for a baby up there, a roll of bonds, its eating up the people's interest money, coming down around the side here, there's a globe, with North and South America, the North Pole and the Panama canal were big issues at that time, whether a country would control the canal, or if one of the big businesses would take control. Over here is a big flag, its also made of concrete, you'll notice that over here is a turkey counter-balancing the flag, that's because Mr. Dinsmoor felt that the national bird should be a turkey, rather than a bald eagle, much like Benjamin Franklin did. This flag is on a ball bearing system, so it rotates in the wind, just like a weathervane, and it still works today--it doesn't take a lot of wind to make it move. This also represents the govt protecting the trust companies instead of protecting the people. This woman is being attacked (by the octopus), she was the one who was working in the factories while the men were fighting in the war, this soldier is being attacked into his knapsack. Mr. Dinsmoor said that when you have a soldier around, you always have a woman chasing him, so this woman is chasing the soldier, the soldier is shooting at the Indian at the next tree. The Indian is shooting at the dog further down, the dog is after the fox on the limb, the fox is after the bird, bird is after the worm, worm is eating a leaf on the tree. Its the social Darwinism theory of the big businesses eating up after the little guy working with his hands for his money...we'll walk on down here then...

On the outside the logs are made of limestone. This is very unusual, he started building this as a tourist attraction right from the start. The inside here, you'll notice that no two doors or windows are built the same size...

in 1917 his first wife passed away, he had prepared the mausoleum outside for both of them to be entombed in, but the city wouldn't allow for her to be buried out there, so she was actually buried in the cemetery. Later on, he went out there, dug her up, brought her back to the mausoleum, put her in a steel vault, run cement over her before the city could do anything about it. So him and the city were always having problems together like that... This second picture is a picture of his 2nd wife and a daughter they had together...he hired a housemaid to come work in the house after his first wife died, her name was Emily Brozek...in 1924 her and Mr. Dinsmoor got married, he was 81 yrs old, and she was 20 years old.



This was quite the scandal for the town here...

In 1930 Mr. Dinsmoor developed cataracts and became blind, he was placed in this bedroom here, where he died in 1932. He was 89.

His wife remarried, lived here for about 10 years before moving with the family to Missouri and thats where she died in 1995 at the age of 91. After she left, the



house was left to a daughter from the first marriage, and her and her husband used it for apartments...and the place was not very well taken care of. The city was about ready to tear this place down. in 1968 a couple here in town took it over and started to rework the place back into what Mr. Dinsmoor had created. In 1978 it was placed on the register of Historic Sites... [outside..on the back porch...]

The logs are made of limestone, the hardest limestone that is mined. The ends are dovetailed just like a real log cabin. The balcony and the beams here are formed from cement.

He actually placed the wood forms up above here, and would bring the cement up into the wood forms by bucket. The "bottle work" along the top edge of this porch, this was because Lucas was a dry town, alcohol was not permitted, he'd fill